

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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USE YOUR BIBLE (Lesson #1)

BIBLE, A LIBRARY! Books of the Bible are just that — independently written, by different authors, and written over a period of 1,600 years. The convenience, and propriety, of combining all into one volume is sometimes overshadowed by the mistaken conception a casual reader may have.

For the most part, the books are not chronologically arranged; i.e., the events of Romans did not follow in time, the events of Acts. One cannot read "straight through" and get a connected account. Each book must be separately studied, just as you would study books in a library.

The design or purpose of each book differs. Some are historical, some are written much as a thesis on some vital subject, some are collections of hymns of praise, some are personal letters -- whose value lies in the application of principles to like circumstances in our present day. NONE are mystical symbols, to be used as tea leaves for "fortune telling." Although figurative language is used, as in our normal conversations, its meaning must be determined by context and not by the reader's "feelings."

Regard each book as a separate volume upon your shelf. Before you begin to draw conclusions, determine the writer, to whom written, time and circumstances (when and why?) as these may affect meaning of content.

GETTING READY TO BEGIN. Preparation for serious study is within the grasp of the ordinary reader. Note the general placement of the book (Old or New Testament) and then read the first few paragraphs. Many books contain their own introduction. If your Bible has center reference (the scripture citations coordinated with the text by numbers or letters) read all THAT PERTAIN TO NAMES OF PEOPLE AND PLACES. (Skip other reference in initial study.) Use maps in back of your Bible to locate places.

Now, using large print text, read a whole book completely through. Most New Testament books are short, and this can be done easily at a single reading. If the book is very long, read large sections at a time. Read rapidly, not stopping to study a particular verse. Purpose of this first reading is to acquaint yourself with general context and subject matter.

This may seem extreme; but actually you should read through two or three times — or until you begin to see the book as a whole, and can note its natural divisions and subjects. Only then should you try to study a particular verse, or come to some conclusion about some teaching.

A Bible dictionary is extremely helpful, and later you may want a concordance. But nothing can take the place of reading and meditation upon the text itself. Why not start today?

- Robert F. Turner, via *Plain Talk*, April, 1965, Vol. 2, No. 3, page 5.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE?

If you are seeking a wife -- is one as good as another? If you are sick -- is one doctor as good as another? If you are catching a train -- is one as good as another? If you are buying a house -- is one as good as another? If you are taking medicine -- is one as good as another?

The Lord's church is the one He bought with His own blood. Why not obey the gospel and let Him add you to His church, over which He rules as Supreme

Head, and in which the Holy Spirit dwells? Surely, it does make a difference! Why wait until the Judgment to acknowledge this? It will then be too late!

Personal Evangelism: Motivation

All biblical learning will not help us if we do not GO! There are things necessary to be successful in the actual practice of soul winning. However, unless we are moved to go we shall win no one to Christ and be lost ourselves! Psychologically, we condition ourselves by "studying to do personal work." While we are studying, we are not going; when we stop studying the sense of urgency to "go" subsides. Therefore, we condition ourselves against getting involved! We must break down that wall of hindrance, refuel our motors, and release the brakes and accelerate across that barrier line into the field of opportunity.

There are three forces that should provide us with the fuel to move us, as the Bible teaches we should be moved, in doing personal evangelism. The first force is from above. God wants us to win others to Christ our Savior. He tells us through the apostles, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20). Timothy was told by Paul, "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). So, it is our duty, as well as our privilege, to teach others to become Christians and to grow and develop into teachers themselves (Heb. 5:11-14). Being conscious of the fact that God wants us to be engaged in the activity should supply us with the "get-up-and-go" to move us.

The second force that should move us is from within. Having experienced the peace, joy and satisfaction and excitement of being saved, should create within us a desire to move others. We should desire to share with others (Rom. 1:14-18; 1 Tim. 1:12-16). Paul felt that he was obligated to tell the story of Jesus' salvation by grace to the people in Rome and all over the world, regardless of their nationality, social standing, educational

background, etc. "All" to him were the objects of God's love and grace, and he was appreciative of his opportunity to declare the message to them. If we are any less desirous of sharing with others, and feel that it is a "burden," then what does that say about our heart's condition. I am afraid that if we had a spiritual "check-up" by the great Physician, He might declare that our heart "is not right in the sight of God" (Acts 8:21).

A third force that should move us is around us. Seeing man in his sins madly rushing to destruction should arouse our compassion for him (Matt. 9:36-38). The "love" that moved God to send His Son to die for us (Jn. 3:16) and the love of Jesus for us (Rom. 5:8), should trigger that mechanism within us to release that energy to move us, to activate us in this direction! If we have seen the "power" of godliness (2 Tim. 3:5) at work in our lives transforming our lives into the "image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29), then we ought to be longing for such a change and be willing to make whatever amount of contribution to this end possible. The Master is our "example" (1 Pet. 2:21) and He was not satisfied without making the supreme sacrifice in order that man could be saved; what right do we have to call ourselves His disciples and not be interested in the same thing He was concerned with (cf. Phil. 2:5)? We should be moved by considering unprofitable and destructive activities of people. These people could be changed from a destructive behavior to a beneficial behavior.

I make the following appeal: Let us go forth together - with faith in our hearts that God's plan is effective! In addition to faith in God's plan, we need to have faith in man to listen, if we approach him correctly – honestly, cordially, confidently, yet in humility. We need to know that a person has the right to refuse us an entrance into his home, if he so desires. Also, may we remember that he has probably been approached by people who were more interested in his money than in his spiritual condition. He can thus rightly suspect our aim as being something less than totally for his good; we must be operating on the basis that we are going to get something in return from him for his co-operation. However, let's be what we say we are, and may we demonstrate that unselfishness which characterized our Lord. We cannot make a person obey the Lord; he must obey of his own free will. Also, we need to be conscious of the same principle in our lives:

no one can make us do personal evangelism. However, if we have that inner-drive, no one can keep us from doing it (Phil. 3:13-14). Everybody has some trouble getting started. But the idea of waiting is perhaps the most common excuse for not doing it. In reality this waiting is destructive to the soul - yours and the prospect's. They are out there. So, beloved, get started!

- William C. Sexton, Truth Magazine, p. 594, August 7, 1975
[edited for content –GFS]

FOLLOW ONLY THE BIBLE

To actually and truly stand upon the Bible, then, is to believe and do the things that the Bible teaches and to leave undone everything that it does not teach. No man can allow his preference or his opinion to prevent him from doing anything the scriptures require, nor can he permit them to incite him to do anything as service to God that they do not authorize and command. In no other way can anyone rightfully say that the Bible is his guide and that he stands candidly and fully on Bible ground.

- James A. Allen, 1954, via The Graphic Evangelist, May 15, 1983.

- > Our Desire: "Speaking truth in love" (Eph. 4:15); to "turn from darkness to light" (Acts 26:18); "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).
- > Those who think it permissible to tell white lies soon grow color-blind.
- > One who will stand for nothing will likely fall for anything.
- > For success, try aspiration, inspiration, and perspiration.

*Elders: Gregg Needham,
Gordon Percell & Gary Smalley*

Evangelist: Gary Smalley

Sunday AM: 9:30 & 10:30

Sunday PM: 5:00

Wednesday PM: 7:00



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)